



MINIMIZING THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN ECO- TOURISM AND CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Eco-tourism is the cradle component and a breather to the concept of Corporate Environmental Citizenship (CEC) in an attractive tourist package. Paving way to reduced carbon footprints by offering financial assistance to local communities, resource conservation, mapping adventure & picturesque sites on tourist maps; eco-tourism is slated towards contributing to CEC by acting as an active catalyst promoting a forward progression. This conceptual paper envisages to minimize the existing dichotomy between the Eco-tourism and CEC and offer qualitative prescripts justifying the modalities between the two concepts in the ambit of the paper title. The inductive technique employed in this exploratory paper uses conceptual framework analysis applied on the literature derived from authentic data repositories by opting systematic data mining. The paper holds immense potential for nature conservationists, natural resource allocators, policy implementers, tourist guides, tourism planners, destination marketers, social advocates of CEC and harbingers of societal change.

KEYWORDS: Carbon footprints, Corporate Environmental Citizenship (CEC), Eco-tourism, Resource conservation.

1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To justify the modalities between the concept of Corporate Environmental Citizenship (CEC) & Eco-tourism and minimize the dichotomy between them.

2. INTRODUCTION

The buttressing between Corporate Environmental Citizenship (CEC) and eco-tourism has yielded symbiotic benefits for CEC & environment based tourism. As eco-tourism generates jobs for aborigines, diversifies the economic standards and assists in stimulation of native incomes; it also infuses a sense of CEC. As inhabitants of a particular eco-system fight for their sustenance and appropriate resource allocation; there is an equal opportunity for the socio cultural acceptability of an eco-friendly citizenship to thrive. The humanistic and environmental responsibility of citizens takes a new discourse in the garb of CEC & at the same time substantiates an eco-friendly mannerism of propelling tourism. The modalities between CEC & eco-tourism may seem far-fetched at the first instance; however the research delves deeply into both the concepts to find out the dichotomy between the two and subsequently to minimize it for a better socio-environmental cause which is economically viable. If the eco-tourism is to be made sustainable in the light of CEC then it must be orchestrated to have harmonic attributes like:

- i) Be economically viable
- ii) Be environmentally responsible
- iii) Be socially acceptable.

Only then eco-tourism can be viewed as a means of collaborating local development with the chords of resource conservation in a way that it becomes a part and parcel of citizenship. This conceptual paper aims at minimizing the dichotomies between CEC and eco-tourism by studying literature based modalities between the two concepts covered in the ambit of the paper.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 EXPLORING CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP (CEC)

The concept of corporate environmental citizenship (CEC) has been projected as the sum total of the policies and precautions that organizations have to implement so that the detrimental impact on the environment may be minimized (Kusku, 2007, p. 75). Few researchers narrate CEC as an instrument for creating such organizational systems that may improve the existing environmental conditions rather than on the reduction of environmental hazards that factories/organizations produce or emit (see Rondinelli and Berry, 2000, p. 81). CEC lowers the operating costs which result in efficient operations and this subsequently results in enhancement of revenue and productivity output (Ervin et al, 2013). Additionally, CEC inculcates a sense of ecological consciousness among consumers and impart the much needed propulsive force to sales performance (Yu et al, 2011). This justifies the need of organizations to embark on CEC and use it as a tool for protection and preservation of ecological environment. Ever since 1990s, a couple of excerpts have been center staged around CEC and address environmental issues from an organizations' perspective. These concepts are a mix of myriad terminologies like: (a) Corporate environmentalism (Banerjee, 1998) (b) Eco-

logical sustainability (Shrivastava, 1995a) (c) Environmental commitment (Henriques and Sadorsky, 1999) (d) Eco-centred organizations/eco-centred management (Purser et al., 1995; Shrivastava, 1995b) (e) Environmental performance (Russo and Fouts, 1997) (f) Green organizational routines (Boons and Strannegard, 2000). These terminologies are well substantiated by (Qureshi et al, 2015) who has linked three environmental interventions with the concept of CEC. These interventions include:

- (a) Legitimization of environmental activities within the firm
- (b) Equivocal emphasis on biophysical environment by making it an indispensable part of organizational strategy
- (c) Inclusion of ecological issues in the organization's strategic planning

Also, the business firms are of the view that it is the firm's willingness to partake in environmental interventions that serves as a cradle for breeding CEC.

3.2 ECO-TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY

Ecotourism is a form of responsible tourism as it leads to the conservation of natural habitat (Blangy and Wood, 1993, p.32). Empirical evidences reveal that increased environmental knowledge is positively correlated with favorable environmental attitudes (Bradley, et al., 1999). The prime objective of sustainable form of tourism (depicted by eco-tourism) is to escalate the economic viability of the tourism industry and at the same time minimizing the detrimental impact on the ecological environment and in due course, preserving the culture and natural resources of the tourism destination spot so that the future generations may continue reaping it. Kals et al. (1999) has evidenced that there is no rational basis for an eco-friendly behavior. Rather, he has pointed out that there are certain nature predictive for an eco-friendly behavior. These predictive are:

- (i) Past and current experiences with nature
- (ii) Cognitive interest in ecology
- (iii) Emotional affinity towards ecological environment
- (iv) Emotional resentment pertaining to loose environmental protection regimes

Role of regional identity in environmental behavior is rationalized by study of Carrus et al. (2005) whose research on tourism & environment related behavior relevant to environmental psychology have been neatly touched upon. Eco-tourism and sustainability synergistically work to:

- (a) Enhance environmental awareness
- (b) Satisfy the inherent individual curiosity
- (c) Positively reinforce the pro-conservation values of tourists thereby enabling a positive discourse to protect Mother Nature in the near future.

Myopic focus of government policies on instant economic development by

ignoring the long run ecological and social implications (Marsden, 2000; Ozen and Ozen, 2004) leads to stunted environmental regulation. Moreover, the low expectations of society regarding environmental concerns do not politically compel the government agencies to change their environmental regulation outlook. Among a list of 43 nations studied by Inglehart (1995), it has been revealed that wealthier or developed countries attach priority to economic concerns over ecological issues thereby leading to a faster impairment of environment.

3.3 WEAVING ECO-TOURISM AND CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP VIA CHORDS OF SUSTAINABILITY

When pro-conservation values are enhanced in collaboration with knowledge about the environment; it is anticipated to have a dual impact. Not only do the visitors get cautious about their nature conservation interventions in the near future but they also treat the eco-tourism site with care and caution (Orams and Hill, 1998). Enforcement of environmental standards often begin to suffer at the hands of foreign investment and a craving for enhancing the national production (Marsden, 2000). Within the ambit of CEC practices, business firms often start sulking for economic survival in context to developing nations and end up ignoring CEC practices thereby sidelining the principles of sustainability. At this juncture, economic priority often over rides the eco-concerns and subsequently at societal level, its legitimization often loses ground. Franzen (2003) supports these excerpts with research suggesting that a lesser percentage of respondents of poor (developing) nations exhibit CEC in comparison to their wealthier (developing) nation counterparts. The respondents prioritized economic growth over environment protection. Research on tourism studies conducted by Lee and Moscardo (2005) indicate that tourists who are merely exposed to eco-friendly practices at tourist destination spots have less CEC (or pro- environmental behavior) in contrast to those tourists who were eco-educated priorly. This led to a deduction that vis-à-vis supply side measures, it is the demand driven approaches that may substantiate a major dimension of eco-tourism via CEC based sustainability.

3.4 INDUCTION OF ECO-FRIENDLY BEHAVIOR IN CEC VIA ECO-TOURISM

Tourists with small carbon footprint that visit a destination spot are referred to as 'demand driven measures' by Dolnicar (2006). Attitudes which are of psychographic origin speak for the personal characteristics that are responsible for pro- environment behavior (Becker et al. , 1981; Carrus et al. , 2005). Inclination towards ecological environment (Kals et al. , 1999) and other plethora of behaviors like active campaigning on eco-concerns, opting for eco- friendly mode of transport, financial contribution to environmental causes, emphasis on recycling, waste management (see Kals et al. , 1999 for a list of such behavioral indicators) are a true reflection of emotional attachment towards ecology. Few demographics like gender, age, education and techno savvy approach have impact on the espousal of water cycling regimes (Kasperson et al., 1974). Among the above stated demographic variables, environmental volunteering (a subset of CEC) is greatly backed up by the education level of the respondents considered as a socio- demographic variable (Edwards & White 1980; Florin, Jones & Wandersman, 1986; Curtis, Grabb & Baer, 1992). Dolnicar (2004) has identified respondents that maintain a distinctive environmental stewardship and believe in sustaining the ecological integrity of the geographical site while visiting an eco-tourism destination and they all adhered to minimal ecological footprints. Tourists which exhibited high pro- environmental values were termed as 'Biocentric' segments by Fairweather, Maslin and Simmons (2005). These bio-centric segments showed commonality in:

- Usage of eco- labels
- Belief in eco- certifications
- Willingness to pay a premium price for an eco- friendly accommodation.

Therefore, a sense of corporate environmental stewardship was induced among such people with common profile touched through the medium of eco-tourism.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Nature: Conceptual Paper
- Design: Exploratory Research Design
- Data mining technique: Systematic Search
- Analysis type: Qualitative analysis

Technique of qualitative analysis: The entire literature review has been segregated into four vital frames (depicted under four different sub-headings in the literature review). The similar prescriptions have then been superimposed via 'conceptual anchors' to substantiate the eventual findings. The 'conceptual anchors' used in this research are formed within each of the four sections (earlier referred to as vital frames) and have been utilized to draw qualitative inferences via 'Conceptual framework analysis' as the research technique.

- Source of data: The literature has been derived from authentic secondary data repositories including both online and print journals.

5. FINDINGS

Based on the vast literature review and applied conceptual framework analysis,

the probable findings of the paper are:

- CEC (Corporate Environmental Citizenship) lays impetus on organizational systems by improving the environmental conditions & thereby plays a direct role in ecological conservation & indirect role in promoting eco-tourism.
- Economic, ecological and societal survival form the crux of CEC which also legitimizes the base value of eco-tourism.
- CEC is at the epicenter of environmental consciousness generating eco-values for both customers & tourism providers and has potential to generate eco-tourism.
- Eco-tourism imparts regional identity to corporate citizens in the light of environmental stewardship & boosts the pro-conservation values of visitors.
- CEC legitimizes environmental activities within the organization & emphasizes the interjection of preservation of biophysical environment by making it a part of organizational strategy and in turn, serving as a catalyst for promoting eco-tourism.
- Value extension interventions of eco-tourism imparts sufficient momentum to pro-environment enabled CEC in the long run.
- CEC generates emotional affinity towards ecological environment thereby acting as a propelling agent for making ecological sites as probable tourist destinations, eventually becoming a promoter of eco-tourism.
- Pro-conservation values pertaining to the environment have a synergistic impact on both CEC & eco-tourism in the light of sustainable strategic management.

6. CONCLUSION

Eco- tourism needs to be viewed as a mix of responsible tourism that stems out of a corporate social behavior with its roots lying in a more socio acceptable form of citizenship that respects natural environment. It is a means of achieving resource conservation coupled with local development that a socially responsible citizenship craves for. The dichotomy which the ideologists have in mind regarding the two perplexing concepts have been neatly unfolded to minimize the theoretical friction. The goals of tourism and the objectives of CEC overlap leading to a relentless pursuit of sustainable ecological system. The spectrum of corporate environmental responsibilities has magnified over the decades and has laid sufficient impetus & subsequently intruded in the ambit of eco- tourism. Eco- tourism appears to be accomplishing similar strategic motives as CEC thereby leaving little room for dichotomy to creep in. CEC is at the epicenter of environmental consciousness & eco- values and can be treated as an accelerator of eco- tourism. Also, extension interventions of eco- tourism complements the pro- conservation values that CEC stands for. The objective of this paper in minimizing the dichotomy between CEC and eco- tourism stands justified in the light of the research. Further, it takes an element of introspection by us as responsible citizens, to collaborate the respect for ecology and quench our quest for tourism based exploration in a more environmentally palatable manner. Ecotourism, if it is to be sustained, must be economically viable, environmentally appropriate, and socio-culturally acceptable.

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